THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

National policy on Steel

478. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 3858, given in the Rajya Sabha on the 25th April, 2003 and state;

(a) whether the National Policy on steel has been finalised;

(b) if not, whether a Committee was set up to formulate Natipnal Policy on steel;

(c) whether the recommendations of the Committee has been obtained; if so, the details thereof;

(d) how Government are going to ensure protection to domestic industry from unfair competition monitoring the capacity and investment, arrangement of finance, land acquisition, etc.; and

(e) what plans are there to reduce the cost of steel?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The draft National Steel Policy prepared by the Committee under the Chairmanship of the Development Commissioner for Iron & Steel has been circulated amongst a duly constituted Core Task Group (CTG), comprising of professionals and economists who are connected with the steel sector. The comments of individual members of the CTG are being obtained.

(d) In a liberalised scenario the Government plays the role of a facilitator. Through policy initiatives the Government provides an enabling environment to foster the growth of steel industry.

(c) In a deregulated and decontrolled era decisions regarding improvement in operational efficiency, aimed at reduction in costs of production, are taken by the individual companies in order to maintain their competitive edge in the market. The Government helps in removing the bottlenecks for the overall development of the steel industry.

Increasing prices of Steel

†479. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN' :
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI :

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the prices of steel has been on the increase for the last eighteen months in the country;

(b) if so, the details of such increase after July, 2002 to October, 2003;

(c) the reasons for such increase;

(d) whether the same is due to increase in production cost of Steel; and

(e) if so, to what extent the production cost of Steel has increased?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Domestic price movement from July, 2002 to October, 2003 in respect of certain representative categories of long and flat steel products as observed in the Mumbai market is enclosed as Statement. (*See* below)

(c) and (d) The main reason for rise in steel price is the global increase in the demand for steel. The domestic prices have followed the general pattern of international prices. The increase in demand from the domestic steel consuming industries has further reinforced the upward movement of prices. Sharp rise in the cost of metallics and certain other critical inputs like iron ore, coal, coke, nickel and ferro alloys has also contributed to the rise in prices.

(e) Cost of production is a commercial information for the steel companies and data for the same is not maintained by the Ministry.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.